

February 9, 2017  
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# THE Baptist Record

141 = 6 MS  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Nashville, Tennessee

FEB 16 2017

Vol. 141  
No. 6

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## BRIEFS

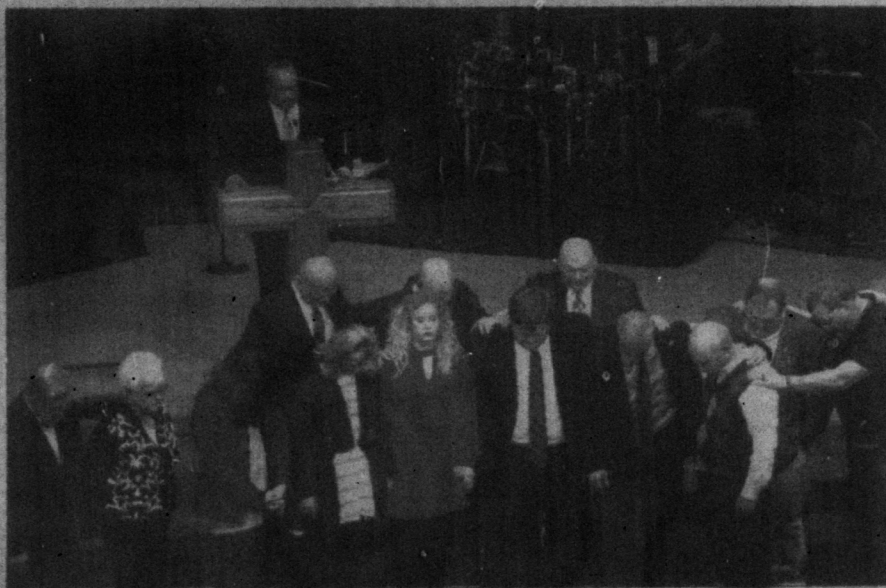
### MISS. BAPTISTS RELEASE DIXIE NATIONAL PLANS

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — Mississippi Baptists will have a strong presence this year at the largest livestock/rodeo show east of the Mississippi River, the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson. On Feb. 12, a special complimentary breakfast for rodeo participants will be held at 8 a.m. in the Farmer's Market building, sponsored by the men's ministry department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). Morrison Heights Church in Clinton, and Mike and Lisa Knight of Boots and More store in Jackson. On February 16-19, the MBCB evangelism department will host a booth at the Equine Expo located in the Equine Mart on the Fairgrounds. At the booth in 2016, Mississippi Baptist volunteers shared Christ with 1,115 people. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth on Feb. 15-16 from 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m., and on Feb. 19 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Volunteers usually work two-hour shifts. To volunteer, contact MBCB evangelism director Don Lum at (601) 292-3278. E-mail: lburns@mbcb.org.

### BOY SCOUTS TO ACCEPT TRANSGENDER YOUTH

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) announced Jan. 30 it would begin accepting as members biological girls who wish to identify as boys. "For more than 100 years, the Boy Scouts of America, along with schools, youth sports, and other youth organizations, have ultimately deferred to the information on an individual's birth certificate to determine eligibility for our single-gender programs," the BSA said in its announcement. "However, that approach is no longer sufficient as communities and state laws are interpreting gender identity differently, and these laws vary widely from state to state."

## STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE



**WITH HUMBLE HEARTS** — Staff, students, and alumni from William Carey University in Hattiesburg who attended the 2017 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference Jan. 30 were invited to the altar for special prayer led by Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans and former two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention, on behalf of the Baptist-affiliated school after it was heavily damaged by an EF3 tornado on Jan. 21. The campus did not record any fatalities due to the storm, and only seven non-life-threatening injuries. They were surrounded by Mississippi Baptists who were present at the conference. (Photo by Tony Martin)

## Gathering inspires, encourages

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

The 2017 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference was held Jan. 29-30 at Northcrest Church, Meridian.

"I never want to say this was the best, but I was pleased," said Don Lum, director of evangelism for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson and coordinator of the annual event.

"We 'bake the cake,' but God comes along and pours the icing. God seemed to permeate every bit of the conference this year," Lum said, noting the high level of planning and preparation that goes into the event each year.

"Folks enjoyed being together," Lum observed. "We need to understand the importance of coming together for this event. Men and women were blessed by the speakers. The speakers came from different angles to reach us. I came away personally challenged."



**PRaise AND WORSHIP** — The choir of Northcrest Church, Meridian, directed by worship pastor Paul Davis, leads the congregation in praise and worship Jan. 30 at the 2017 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference. Northcrest Church was the host church. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Early estimates put attendance at 2,000-2,200 people.

Kevin Hamm, senior pastor of Gardendale First Church in Gardendale, Ala., since 2008,

started off the conference on the evening of Jan. 29 with a message to a packed house. Praise and worship was led by

see EVANGELISM on p. 6

## Bill would eliminate Johnson Amendment

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist members of the U.S. Congress have introduced legislation to enable churches and other non-profit organizations to endorse candidates or otherwise participate in political campaigns, without fear of penalties from the Internal Revenue Service.

The so-called Johnson Amendment went in effect after then-U.S. Senator and future U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas led in altering the federal tax code in 1954 to bar IRS 501(c)(3) organizations "from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office."

The Free Speech Fairness Act (S. 264), introduced the day before U.S. President Donald Trump publicly reiterated his intent to eliminate the Johnson Amendment, would free pastors, churches, and other tax-exempt entities to be directly involved in election campaigns.

However, the proposed measure would still prohibit financial donations from such organizations to candidates or campaigns, one of the bill's sponsors said.

see BILL on p. 6

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Stop the lottery

**W**e got it right. When our gambling Governor, Phil Bryant, floated that obvious trial balloon last October proposing a state lottery be seriously considered in the 2017 regular session of the Mississippi Legislature, we knew a bill was on its way.

When Bryant went on to endorse a lottery in his State of the State address before the legislature on Jan. 17, he said, "We can no longer contain the people's desire for a lottery; we can only force them to travel." Really? Couldn't the same specious argument be made for the legalization of prostitution? How about legalizing heroin and methamphetamine, so Mississippians won't have to drive elsewhere to score some?

As far as the human condition goes, what's the difference between the members of that wholly intransigent of soul-destroying vices (gambling, prostitution, drug abuse)?

Don't scoff. A generation ago, who would have thought we would have willingly traveled as far down the slippery slope of perdition as we have today, with the vast expansions of legal vices at the hands of our political class?

In the category of dirty tricks committed in the service of a state lottery, it would be difficult to top Rep. Mark Baker, a Republican who represents the Rankin County area. Baker, chairman of the House Judiciary A Committee, used his authority to completely strip an unrelated bill (H.B. 804) and insert lottery language that ensured the issue would still be alive after an upcoming deadline had passed.

H.B. 804, which Baker had introduced, originally dealt with revising the process of using mental health experts like psychologists and psychiatrists to determine whether an individual accused of a crime is competent to be prosecuted. After the stripping, the name of the bill — a bill which was probably needed badly by the state's court system — was changed to, "An act to require the Mississippi Gaming Commission to establish a state lottery."

Gone were the revisions that would have improved the court system, and in all probability would have increased public confidence in the court system. Gone were the provisions that would have protected the accused. All for the advancement of a lottery bill.

News media have reported that Philip Gunn, Speaker of the House and an elder at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, paid Baker a visit. Gunn has been opposed to a state lottery from the beginning, and apparently didn't appreciate Baker's back room maneuvering.

Baker was unmoved. He was quoted in Jan. 31 issue of The Clarion Ledger newspaper as declaring, "This is my bill. This is a lottery bill." As a result of Baker's actions, a lottery bill is now able to be presented to the full House for a vote.

Mississippi's statewide officials like the governor, and our legislators, in this case the ones who are advocating a lottery, were hired by the voters to improve the lives of Mississippians, not drag us down. That's what legalized alcohol has done, despite our leaders' promises. That's what casinos and fantasy sports betting have done, despite our leaders' promises. Now, our leaders are on their way to dragging us farther down with a lottery.

Since public officials — many of them well-meaning servants of the people — have been hired by us to look after our interests, we have every right to contact them and let them know how we feel about the lottery. The Governor can be contacted at (601) 359-3150. His e-mail address is [http://www.governorbryant.com/contact/](mailto:http://www.governorbryant.com/contact/). His mailing address is P.O. Box 139, Jackson, MS 39205-0139.

The general telephone number for legislators during the session is (601) 359-3770. For contact information on specific legislators, visit <http://www.legislature.ms.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

Contact them. It is our civic duty. If we don't, we will all get the government we deserve.

## Take the kids along

**W**hy take your family on a mission trip overseas? Here are a few reasons:

■ **For the sake of the nations.** A baby or child is a sure way into the heart of most people groups. Kids reach across the barriers of almost any culture, offering a less-threatening way to engage. They open doors for conversations that can lead to Jesus-breaking-in moments. Taking a two-year-old? Bring multiple toy trucks and encourage them to share with a child at a park. Pulling along a teenager? Don't say no when they want to join a group of teens skateboarding in an international city.

It is the universal language of love to join in with other people who are also made in God's image and a way of sharing Christ using the unique inroads of age. The nations are sometimes more open to a word or a smile from your child than one from you, and those interactions can be the means through which the Gospel seed is planted in the heart of someone who, just moments before, was a stranger.

■ **For the sake of your friends and extended family.** When we mention these short-term trips, we are often asked, "Are you taking your kids with you?" Perhaps by choosing to do what seems radical in the opinion of those who know and love us is a testimony that impacts the way they view Christ and the world and our calling to go. Our stories of God's faithfulness through difficulties, as well as our entertaining tales, hold up Christ to the people at home.

■ **For the sake of your kids.** There is a logical benefit to taking your kids along for educational purposes. The connection to culture, language, and history are all worthwhile reasons to get a stamp on your passport. Yet, as a follower of Christ, you can offer your kids more than just the excitement of adventure or knowledge. Time among the nations gives your children a front-row seat to view God's great



**Guest opinion**  
with Amy M. King

power, love, and compassion. It is also life-changing for your kids to see you out of your comfort zone, vulnerable and trusting.

■ **For your sake.** Taking children along, whether they are 15 months or 15 years old, forces you to view the world through their eyes. How are they adjusting? How are they interpreting what they see? How are they seeing and sharing Jesus in a way you've never considered before? Every time I explain my faith to my sons in these moments, especially when senses are heightened and our family is weathering this unique experience together, I come away with a renewed sense of who God is and how we each play a role in His story.

■ **Why not?** When God lays it on your heart to take the Good News to the nations, He can use any resource — your education, your finances, your free time, your personality, your skill set — for the Kingdom. For me, that resource list now includes my whole family. Instead of only thinking, "Why?" ask, "Why not?" If God opens the gateway for your family to board a plane together, He will supply all your needs and use you — and your children — to and for the uttermost.

*King is a stay-at-home mom to two sons in Durham, N.C. She leads a group called Moms on Mission (@onmissionmom). Her commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for length and style.*

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**Send news, communication, and address changes to:** The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

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### BAPTISTS

VOLUME 141 • NUMBER 8 • ISSN 0005-5778  
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 616 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.



# Disaster relief ministry's anniversary celebrated

DENTON, Texas (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBD) leaders throughout North America met for their annual Round Table meeting Jan. 23-27 in Denton, Texas, along the way commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the ministry that currently stretches across the country — including Mississippi — and into many foreign nations.

Representatives from nearly all the state Baptist conventions participated in the event at Camp Copass, a Baptist associational campground in Denton, Texas. Portions of the week focused on celebrating five decades of ministry efforts, looking at the present state of the ministry, and preparing for the future.

"Fifty years represents a significant event for us," said Mickey Caison, SBD executive director at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga. "Over those 50 years, we've responded to thousands of disasters, both domestically and internationally. As part of that, we've seen thousands of people come to Christ out of that environment of damage and destruction."

"As we move through that process, we're able to see people come to faith. Because there were no Southern Baptist churches in their community, there was an opportunity for our associations and state conventions to start churches."

On Jan. 23, the group heard from Bob Dixon and John Lanoue, who participated in the first SBD response following Hurricane Beulah in 1967. Using campcraft skills from the Royal Ambassadors ministry, the men turned one-gallon cans into miniature stoves called "Buddy Burners" to prepare hot meals for people impacted by that year's most intense hurricane.

"It's a great reminder of the faithfulness of those who started the work and the faithfulness of those who have continued the work for a very long time," said Gaylon Moss, disaster relief coordinator for North Carolina Baptists.

Roundtable participants also spent significant time debriefing the past year's major deployments, including two major flood events in Louisiana and last fall's response following Hurricane Matthew.

NAMB and state leaders discussed how responses can improve from those experiences and how to involve more Southern Baptists in training events.

"We looked at the need for more online training and 'just-in-time' training," Caison said. "Not a lot of volunteers are willing to give you a whole weekend to get away and be a part of a training event. If they're not going to do it that way, how are we going to get the training material, safety material, and those kinds of things in their hands?"



(ABOVE) BATHED IN PRAYER — Southern Baptist disaster relief workers gather for prayer around North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell and David Melber, NAMB vice-president for the Send Relief program, during their national conference held this year in Denton, Texas. (BP photo)

(AT RIGHT) HALF-CENTURY MARK — Southern Baptist Disaster Relief leaders celebrated the ministry's 50th anniversary during their annual conference in Denton, Texas, on Jan. 23-27, including distribution of T-shirts reflecting the special observance. (BP photo)

Sam Porter, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's state disaster relief director, said SBD has left a legacy among Southern Baptists in mobilizing a wide variety of volunteers for Gospel work.

"It is a unique vehicle for people with Christ in their hearts and a passion to serve others that is set on 'go' whenever the world falls a part in some place," Porter said. "It especially gives opportunities to those who may not feel confidence about their knowledge of the Bible or they don't do well singing."

"Even though we all know they do, they may not feel like they have something to give. When they get to use their God-given gifts or their learned talents in disaster relief tasks, like using a chainsaw or cooking, they realize those abilities can be used greatly to impact the world for Christ and set up the opportunity for someone to hear the Gospel."

Yet Porter and other SBD leaders acknowledged that for the ministry to be most effective, Southern Baptists must mobilize new generations of leaders.

Roundtable participants spent much of their meeting time discussing ways to get more Generation X and Millennial volunteers involved.

"The volunteer pool we have is beginning to age out," Caison said. "Medically and physically they are not able to go and do the kind of work that they've done in the past. We're looking at how we better engage Gen X and Millennials in the ministry."

New volunteers are particularly needed, Caison said, because says SBD's ministry success has brought with it much responsibility. SBD's national partners spoke at the roundtable about the need for Southern Baptists to be prepared to deploy faster and with more volunteers. Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, and the Salvation Army all sent representatives to the roundtable.

"While they all affirmed us and encouraged us in our ministry, they did remind us that we have great responsibility," Caison said. "Red Cross reminded us that it is incumbent on us to be responsive and available. Because of our partnership with them, they can't do their job without us. They wanted us to continue to strive for stronger, faster responses as well as longer sustainability in those responses."

Don Gann, director of men's ministry at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) and coordinator of the convention's disaster relief program, is hopeful about the ministry's next 50 years.

"I hope we can be flexible enough to continue to mobilize Southern Baptists to reach people, and at the same time, do it in a way that will meet the needs of the people who have been affected and also reach a new generation of Southern Baptists. It's a great challenge, but it's a good one. I can't wait for it," said Gann, who led the steering committee for the Round Table but couldn't attend the event because of the ongoing response to heavy storms that struck south Mississippi on Jan. 21.

Those storms included an EF3 tornado that heavily damaged the Hattiesburg main campus of Baptist-affiliated William Carey University. At least three Mississippi Baptist Convention churches were also affected.

NAMB coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state disaster relief ministries.

Southern Baptists have 65,000 trained volunteers including chaplains and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chainsaw, mud-out, command, communication, child care, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild and power generation.

SBD is one of the three largest mobilizers of trained Disaster Relief volunteers in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.

For more information on the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force, contact Gann at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 392-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: dgann@mbcb.org. Web page: www.mbc.org.

## DISASTER RELIEF DONATIONS SOUGHT

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force is currently responding to the EF3 tornado that ripped through Hattiesburg and Petal on Jan. 21, heavily damaging the main campus of Baptist-affiliated William Carey University and affecting at least three Mississippi Baptist Convention churches.

Individuals and churches are encouraged to support the overall relief efforts by giving through MBCB (designate the check for Miss. Baptist Disaster Relief). For those wishing to earmark a donation for WCU, they may still send it through MBCB (designated for WCU Relief).

Donations are being received on-line at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org) or at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Alternatively, WCU support may be sent directly to the university at WCU, 498 Tuscan Ave., Hattiesburg, MS 39401 (designated "Disaster Fund").

Kind donations such as non-perishable food, shoes, clothing, and gift cards are currently not being accepted through MBCB.

The Mississippi Disaster Relief Task Force is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program, the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering, and donations.

**F**lap! That was the sound that was made as I was walking early one morning underneath some trees and an unsuspecting squirrel fell out of the tree and hit the road right in front of me. I'm talking like two feet in front of me. When he hit the ground — flap! — I looked down and thought maybe he had been killed. What I assumed is that this squirrel was running around up in the tree and either reached out to grab a limb and missed it or grabbed one that was broken or one that was too small to hold his weight. Whatever it was, the result was flap. There he was on the ground right before me.

I backed away just to see what might happen. The squirrel did move and after a few seconds began to get his bearings and shook his head and pulled himself together and got up and ran off into some bushes nearby. As I watched him for what amounted to about a minute, I thought how easy it is for us to have an event in our lives that is one of those flap kind of moments when all of a sudden everything changes. From a wonderful, spiritual standpoint, I thought about the times in my own life when I had one of those fall-out-of-the-tree, hit-the-ground, flap moments that stunned me, just like that poor old squirrel. In fact, as you think about it, moments like that happened to some of the great saints in the Bible.

I guess you could say it was a flap moment when Simon Peter stood by the fire and, when questioned, denied Jesus. Not just once, not even twice, but thrice he denied Him. Do you think that morning when he got up and started his journey to see what was going to happen to Jesus he would have ever imagined or ever agreed with you and me that today, big guy, you will deny Jesus three times? You could see him in the circumstances there as Jesus is being tried and being

carried from one place to another and there he is standing with the crowd that wants to see Jesus crucified and he is asked, "Aren't you one of His disciples?" "No, no," and it is as though the flap moment comes.

I have often wondered how many times he thought about that. I wonder how many times he wished that he had not denied Jesus. I wonder how many times someone else brought it up to him: "Hey, you remember that night when you..." "Yes, I remember." It was a flap moment for him. He was stunned just like you and me when we don't live up to our full potential, when in fact, we fail to do the minimal potential of our lives.

It wasn't just Simon Peter who had one of those moments but also the great introducer of Jesus, John the Baptist. He had his own experience with being stunned by his own decision-making and his own actions. He was in prison and so discouraged. He called some of his followers nearby and said, "I want you to go and ask Jesus, 'Are you the One that is supposed to come or look we for another?'" Isn't that interesting? This is the man who

introduced Jesus as the Messiah from heaven to all the world. It is this John who said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). It was this John who said he saw the affirmation upon His life as the spirit of God came upon Him like a dove when He was baptized, but now John the Baptist is questioning Jesus: "Are you the one?" Maybe things have happened in your life. Discouragement has come. Difficulties, circumstances beyond your control that reshaped the feelings and the faith that you can control. There you are, stunned. After flap, you hit the ground, and it happened to John the Baptist.

I think you could even describe whatever it was that happened with the young missionary, John Mark, as a flap. He was with the Apostle Paul on his first missionary journey. Somewhere along the way, something caused him to drop out and to go back home. We actually do not understand. We don't know, but the fact is that he left and Paul was not happy with him. I suppose that you could say he had a flap moment when

whatever it was that called him away, whatever it was that caused him to stop serving and to change directions, whatever it was that caused Paul to be so unhappy with him, stuck with Paul for years to come. For John Mark, maybe it was a flap kind of moment.

All that is to say that whether you're a squirrel or saint, sometimes you don't grab ahold like you ought. You miss doing what you should have done and you bite the pavement and folks nearby hear the flap in your spiritual life. However, be of good cheer for though you may have been stunned, you can be revived. That little ole squirrel finally got up and scurried off and returned to being a squirrel, doing what squirrels do. I didn't see him climb up a big tree real quick, but I'm sure he did. He was made to climb trees. He was made to jump from limb to limb. He was made to do great things as a squirrel but you and I are so blessed that in our service to God we have an incredible Savior who loves us even when we hit the ground, who reaches out to lift us up and restore us even though half the community may have heard us go flap.

Jesus goes to Simon Peter and restores the love, and to John the Baptist He reaffirms who He is and what He came here to do, and John Mark comes back to serve alongside Paul in the greatest needs of Paul's life at a special time. God wants to do that with you, for you, through you. Maybe, just maybe someone reading this article is at a point in their life where they need to get up, get back in relationship with the Lord, and scurry off to the task that He has given him/her to do. Put that in motion today. Make that decision now, and let God take over your life in new and wonderful ways. God bless you.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Just for the Record



**CALHOUN CHURCH, HOT COFFEE**, recently hosted Vision Ministries, Inc., which ministers to local and state prisoners in correctional facilities. Shown are pastor and Mrs. Daryl Coats, George Hensarling, and Bro. and Mrs. Ken Rustin.

Johnny Hale, **SOUTH NETTLETON CHURCH, NETTLETON**, celebrated his seven year anniversary of surrendering to preach Jan. 29.



The WMU of **MT. PISGAH CHURCH, ENID**, recently combined their meeting with Veda Evans' special tea gathering at the parsonage. Fifteen women attended.



The children's choir **SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION**, presented their Christmas program, *What Can I Give Him?*, directed by Marlene Eady and Lauren Hunter.

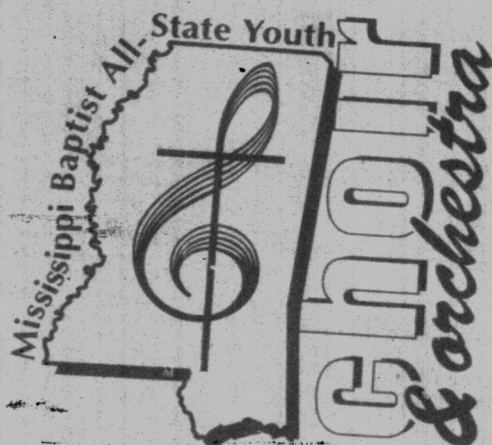


What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS

February 9, 2017

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Communication Services**. *Matthew 10:27 NAS*



The Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra is an auditioned and interviewed group of 9th - 12th graders who are actively involved in the music ministry of a Southern Baptist church in Mississippi.

Contact Music Dept. for more information at [cwtaylor@mbcb.org](mailto:cwtaylor@mbcb.org), or [susancl@bellsouth.net](mailto:susancl@bellsouth.net)  
601-292-3267 | [www.mbcb.org](http://www.mbcb.org)

## MBASYC&O CONCERT TOUR DATES

Wednesday, June 14, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
400 Elm St.  
Richton, MS 39476  
(601) 788-9607

Thursday, June 15, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
300 N Cleveland Ave  
Long Beach, MS 39560  
(228) 864-2584

Friday, June 16, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
1108 Robb St.  
Summit, MS 39666  
(601) 248-6268

Saturday, June 17, 2017  
Highland Colony Baptist Church, 6:00 p.m.  
1200 Highland Colony Pkwy  
Ridgeland MS 39157  
(601) 856-4031

Sunday, June 18, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 11:00 a.m.  
402 N Van Buren St  
Carthage, MS 39051  
(601) 267-4583

First Baptist Church, 6:00 p.m.  
303 1st Ave.  
Amory, MS 38821  
(662) 256-7131

Monday, June 19, 2017  
First Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.  
431 North State Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
(601) 949-1900

## Beginning Ringers Festival

Feb. 25 - Wynndale BC, Terry

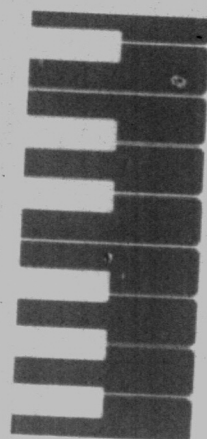
## Mississippi Singing Churchmen in concert:

Monday, February 27 - 7 p.m.  
FBC, Columbia, MS

Tuesday, February 28 - Noon  
Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

Tuesday, February 28 - 7 p.m.  
FBC, Magee

Visit [www.mbcb.org](http://www.mbcb.org) or call Church Music at  
1-800-748-1651, ext. 267.



# 2017

## MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST AREA & STATE KEYBOARD FESTIVALS

Area Keyboard Festival that was to be held at Petal-Harvey Baptist Church, Petal, on original date of Thursday, January 26, 2017, has been **postponed** until  
Thursday, February 23, 2017, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Contact Wyndy South, Church Music Department,  
for additional information, [wsouth@mbcb.org](mailto:wsouth@mbcb.org).

# SUMMER ABIDE

## MISSION >> POSSIBLE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE  
GARAYWA CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER APRIL 10-11, 2017

CONTACT THE PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DEPT. AT  
601-292-3305 OR VCLARY@MBCB.ORG FOR MORE INFO.

## 2017 CHURCH BUDGET LEADERS TRAINING

• NEW  
THIS  
YEAR!

Mississippi Office  
of the State Auditor

**MAY 12-13, 2017**  
**GARAYWA CAMP &  
CONFERENCE CENTER**

For ALL Financial, Budget,  
Treasurers, Pastors, and  
Administrators in all  
churches in Mississippi

**COST: \$45**

### SPEAKER:

Johnny Rakestraw  
Pastor & CPA  
Church Financial Compliance  
Ministerial Financial Compliance  
IRS Financial Compliance

### SCHEDULE:

Friday  
Check in - 4:00-5:00 p.m.  
Dinner - 5:30 p.m.  
First Session - 6:30 p.m.  
Saturday  
Breakfast - 7-8:00 a.m.  
First Session - 8:00 a.m.  
Conclusion - 12:30 p.m.

For more information contact Lisa Leavelle at lavelle@mbcb.org or 601-292-3347

## BIBLE DRILL

Weekday Drills: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday Drill: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, April 18**

FBC, Brookhaven  
Emmanuel BC, Grenada

**Thursday, April 20**

Harrisburg BC, Tupelo  
Petal Harvey BC, Petal

**Saturday, April 22**

Park Place BC, Brandon  
Poplar Springs Drive BC, Meridian

**Tuesday, April 25**

Crossgates BC, Brandon  
Hillcrest BC, New Albany

**Thursday, April 27**

FBC, Starkville  
FBC, Batesville

**Saturday April 29**

(Selection Tournament)

Morrison Heights BC, Clinton

High School (Grades 10 - 12) Registration 10:15am

Middle School (Grades 6 - 9) Registration 11:15am

9 Year Scholarship Drill Registration 1:15pm

All info can be found here: [www.mbc.org/bible-drill](http://www.mbc.org/bible-drill)  
Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept - 601-292-3283

## Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra

~ worship concert ~

Feb. 12

Highland BC, Laurel

6 p.m.

Church Music Department • 601-292-3267



# 2017 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST PREACHING CONFERENCE

The Study of "Mark"  
April 17-19, 2017

Monday, Blue Mountain College  
Tuesday, William Carey University  
Wednesday, Mississippi College

Register today at  
[tinyurl.com/preach2017](http://tinyurl.com/preach2017)

Pastor/Leadership Development  
601-292-3205

## Mississippi Baptist Handbell Festival

March 30 - April 1  
Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon

Barry Burris, Handbell Specialist - Skills Workshop  
Michelle Smith, Handbells Clinician

For more information including schedule and registration forms,  
call Church Music Department at  
1-800-748-1651 (in town — 601-292-3267).  
You can also visit our Web site at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org)



## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE CELEBRATING THE SEASONS OF A WOMAN'S LIFE



**FBC, BILOXI**  
Fri. 6:30 - 9:30 P.M. | Sat. 8:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.  
Cost: \$25.00 per person  
FOR ALL WOMEN 18 AND BEYOND



**FBC, CORINTH**  
Fri. 6:30 - 9:30 P.M. | Sat. 8:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.  
Cost: \$25.00 per person  
FOR ALL WOMEN 18 AND BEYOND

RITA SWEATT



SATURDAY BIBLE STUDY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SHELLY JOHNSON



AWARD WINNING WORSHIP ARTIST

DR. CINDY TOWNSEND



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MISSISSIPPI'S STORYTELLER

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and Hosted by Women's Leadership in South Mississippi!



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Brandon, MS

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[www.mccaf.wordpress.com](http://www.mccaf.wordpress.com) MCB Discipleship/Family Ministry

Pray this day for...

February 10 – February 23, 2017

*"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."*

*Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)*

Pray for: **Karen Brown**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through nursing.

Pray for: **Matthew Burke**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through general evangelism.

Pray for: **Rebekah Clark**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through youth evangelism.

Pray for: **Cindy DeMars**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Guy DeMars**, missionary ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through hospitality coordination.

Pray for: **David & Laurie Bladner**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kaye Brooks**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Thomas & Kerri Dewett**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Aaron & Tiffany Epps**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/outreach & evangelism.

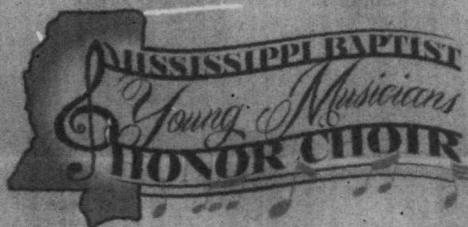
Pray for: **Sheila Flowers**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through administration.

Pray for: **Clarence Frank & Phoebe Harrison**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for: **Kenneth & Kimberly Hathcock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Earl & Ramona Hewitt**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through medicine, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Cynthia Hodgins**, missionary ministering to Deaf Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.



Miss. Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir in concert  
March 25, FBC Florence at 6:30 p.m.

For more information: [http://www.mbc.org/church\\_growth/cm/honor\\_choir.aspx](http://www.mbc.org/church_growth/cm/honor_choir.aspx)  
Contact: Wyndy South, Music Dept., 601-292-3272 locally  
or 1-800-748-1651, ext. 272 statewide | [wsouth@mbc.org](mailto:wsouth@mbc.org)



Miss Brooklyn – 4/6/09  
Parents: J & M  
Restricted

Mr. A.S. – 4/11/12  
Parents: S & M  
Last Frontier

Miss Elisabeth Johnson – 4/25/07  
Parents: Lew & Brandi  
Madagascar

Mr. Benjamin White – 4/16/12  
Parents: David & Regina  
American Peoples

Miss E.S. – 4/26/05  
Parents: S & M  
Last Frontier

Mr. Ethan – 4/17/01  
Parents: Andy & Michelle  
Career Church Planters


Miss Lindsey Williams – 4/27/01  
Parents: Matt and Shea  
Restricted

Encourage an MK with a card! To Be Sent March 17, 2017, by the WMU Office



PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!  
NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.  
FOR SECURITY: cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.  
Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

**HOUSE TOPS**



**WORKSHOPS  
&  
AWARDS  
BANQUET**

March 3 & 4  
Crossgates Baptist Church, Brandon

**Awards Banquet on Friday, March 3, 5-9 p.m.**

Many categories are available for entry!

Visit [mbc.org/witnessing-through-media](http://mbc.org/witnessing-through-media) or contact  
Communication Services at 601-292-3378 for info.





**F**ebruary 12 is Race Reconciliation Sunday. Forgiveness and reconciliation are definitely needed in our culture and society. Christians should be in the vanguard of this effort. We should be intentional in our words and actions concerning this matter. We can defend the past or defuse the present, but we must define the future in a Christian way — The Way, as in the New Testament.

"Affirmative Action" has been a tool utilized to deal with racial inequity. I am recommending "Confirmative Action." If we have a Biblical World View, we must "confirm" and live out the teachings of the Word of God. We start with (1) Creation. We did not evolve. God created the human race in His own image and likeness. Every human being has this image.

Every human being is the crown of creation. We did not lose this image in the fall of Adam and Eve. Our nature fell and became sinful, but every human being still has this image (Genesis 9:6 and 1 Corinthians 11:7). Therefore, every human being deserves respect and courtesy if we take "Confirmative Action."

If we confirm the (2) Crucifixion, we must value every human being. I understand — no, I am aware that certain theologians believe in a limited atonement — that Jesus only died for some human beings, only loves some, and only wants some to be saved. I could not disagree more. Jesus "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

How can I mistreat someone Jesus died for?

If we obey the (3) Commission, we will seek reconciliation for every human being with Jesus. If we are in a right relationship with Jesus, we will be right with our fellow man. The Great Commission is universal — our love cannot be limited. God does not pick and choose — "not willing for any to perish" (2 Peter 3:9). We cannot pick and choose — prejudice and bigotry are sins. If our goal is to evangelize and disciple every human being, we should not mistreat anyone but befriend everyone. If we take the Great Commission seriously, we will be part of the solution to this problem, not part of the problem.

When we consider (4) Church according to Paul, there should be no discrimination. The great mystery he makes known is that Jew and Gentile are to be one in the Body of Christ in the local church. With Jew and Gentile, there are racial, religious, and relationship differences. Yet, they are to be one in Christ. If two individuals, regardless of

how different they may be, are both saved, they have the same Holy Spirit abiding in them, and they are brothers in Christ and children in the family of God.

When we have the love of Christ, (5) Compassion, in our hearts, the Bible says we can love even our enemy. Surely, we can love our neighbor, our co-worker, our fellow citizen. The Good Samaritan climbed over many obstacles in order to climb down into the ditch to help his fellow man — a Jew. "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

"The love of Christ constrains us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). The Golden Rule has no exceptions (Matthew 7:12). Agape love calls us to "Confirmative Action." The second greatest commandment — "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) — calls us to reconciliation. If you hate anyone, you have committed murder in your heart (Matthew 5:22). The fruit of the Spirit is (singular verb) love. "Confirmative Action" does not loathe those around us but will love them.

Biblical (6) Commands will call us to "Confirmative

Action." James chapter 2 commands us to not have respect of persons because God has no respect of persons. It sounds ridiculous to mistreat someone because of the color of their eyes or the color of their hair — how foolish. Conservatives pride themselves on giving the Bible top priority over culture and tradition — so quit using cultural arguments to defend practices that are not Bible based. What Jesus says is more important than what your grandfather said. I would call all of us (including me) to "Confirmative Action." The last time I checked, all means all. Let him that is without sin cast the first stone. The prefix "con" can mean "with." With firm obedience to the Word of God, we can move toward Racial Reconciliation. "Confirmative Action" will be Christian Action.

We want to be available to your church, your youth, your senior citizens, your men's and women's ministries, your association — please contact us if we can help in any way.

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at [kdigby@christianaction.com](mailto:kdigby@christianaction.com).

## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)  
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

## BILL

cont. from p. 1

U.S. Sen. James Lankford (R-Ok.), a member of Quail Springs Church in Oklahoma City, said in a written release after introducing the bill, "The federal government and the IRS should never have the ability to inhibit free speech."



LANKFORD

The First Amendment right of free speech and right to practice any faith, or no faith, are foundational American values that must extend to everyone, whether they are a pastor, social worker, or any charity employee or volunteer."

From 1996-2009, Lankford was the student ministries and evangelism specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and director of the youth programming at the convention's Falls Creek Conference Center.

Congressman Jody Hice (R-Ga.), a former Southern Baptist pastor, is co-sponsoring the bill (H.R. 781) in the U.S. House of Representatives. "The IRS has used the Johnson Amendment to silence and threaten religious institutions and charitable entities. As a minister who has experienced intimidation from the IRS firsthand, I know just how important it is to ensure that our churches and non-profit organizations are allowed the same fundamental rights as every citizen of this great Nation."

HICE

Hice holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth and a doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta. He served as senior pastor of Bethlehem First Church in Bethlehem, Ga., and also served as senior pastor at The Summit Church, a Southern Baptist church in Loganville, Ga., before stepping down to run for Congress.

In addition, Hice has served as first vice president of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

In a Feb. 2 speech at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., Trump pledged to "get rid of, and to totally destroy, the Johnson Amendment and allow our representatives of faith to speak freely and without fear of retribution."

The President made a similar promise during his election campaign in 2016, including in his nomination acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in July.



TRUMP

## EVANGELISM

cont. from p. 1

Paul Davis, worship pastor at Northcrest Church.

The morning session on Jan. 30 featured praise and worship led by Davis and was followed by a message from Clarence Cooper, pastor of Brandon Church in Brandon. Cooper pastored Emmanuel Church in Grenada for 23 years before answering the call to pastor Brandon Church in 2008.

Following Cooper and an interlude of praise and worship led by Davis, Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Church in Pensacola, Fla., brought the message. Traylor has pastored Olive Church since 1990. His weekly radio and television ministry, At the Heart of Things, reaches thousands of homes along the Gulf Coast through podcasts and streaming.

Davis opened the Jan. 30 afternoon session with praise and worship, followed by a message from David Burton, head of David Burton Minis-

tries in Jacksonville, Fla. Burton served 26 years in the evangelism department of the Florida Baptist Convention (FBC) in Jacksonville, and for the last 13 years at FBC served as director of evangelism and lead strategist.

During the last eight years of his ministry there, FBC led the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in total state baptisms.

Other speakers at the Jan. 30 afternoon session included Jeff LaBorg, pastor since 2015 of Fairview Church in Corryton, Tenn.; Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer; and Fred Luter, pastor since 1986 of Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans and former two-term SBC president.

Of special note was Luter's leading in prayer for William Carey University, in the aftermath of the EF3 tornado that struck the Baptist-affiliated school's main campus in Hattiesburg on Jan. 21. Staff, students, and alumni of Carey were invited to the altar for a time of prayer, and were sur-

"I don't consider this strictly a pastor's conference each year. It's for all Mississippi Baptists, in part to help fulfill the Great Commission. The Great Commission won't stay on the front burner if we don't make it happen."

Don Lum

director of evangelism for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

rounded by Mississippi Baptists in attendance.

"I don't consider this strictly a pastor's conference each year," Lum said. "It's for all Mississippi Baptists, in part to help fulfill the Great Commission. The Great Commission won't stay on the front burner if we don't make it happen."

Lum praised the staff and members of the host church. "Northcrest was a wonderful host for this event. They understood the significance of what we wanted to do. They came to work as greeters, ushers, and other roles. I am very grateful for them."

At the conclusion of the conference, Lum also made

an important observation on the health of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. "I just sense a real harmony among Mississippi Baptists," he said.

The 2018 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference is scheduled for Jan. 28-29 at Brandon Church, Brandon. For more information, contact Lum at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. E-mail: dlum@mbcb.org. Web site: mbcb.org.

The conference is supported each year by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

## MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENWOOD, MS. IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resume to 500 W. Washington Street, Greenwood Mississippi 38930 or to fbcgreenwood@bellsouth.net

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LINCOLN ASSOCIATION: VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH PASTOR. Please send resumes to: Victory Baptist Church 1411 Mallaleu Dr SE Brookhaven, MS 39601.

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AXIQA RH QVX AOHIUGUMXA, IHY QVX

SVRXC EGGFA IQ CXIAQA.

DMWX QNXHQO: CGEQO-ARZ

Clue: N = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 21:36

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



## Compromised Potential • Judges 16:4-6, 13-20

Wow! When I read Samson's story I thought, "Dude, what were you thinking?" Instead of fulfilling his calling to the fullest, Samson lived a life of compromise. Compromise lead to disobedience. Disobedience led to lies, deception and destruction.

The story of Samson and Delilah is a popular lesson from the Old Testament. Their story has been included in Children's Bible story books and taught in Sunday School, as it is here. However, I believe we must consider Samson's life prior to Delilah to really understand his compromising nature. Think about this as the prequel to our lesson.

God intervened. Manoah and his wife could not have children. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife and then to Manoah. He told them she would have a son. He said that the boy would be "a Nazirite to God from the womb" (Judges 13:5, NKJV). Being a Nazirite meant that the boy was called to serve the Lord for his whole life. The mother and boy could not drink wine or touch anything unclean, like a dead animal or person. Also, his hair was not to be cut. Manoah's wife gave birth to Samson. They raised him as a Nazirite, just as the Angel had instructed. Samson was God's chosen man.

As they had in the past, the Children of Israel rebelled and turned against God. In response, God allowed the Philistines to conquer the land and reign

over the Israelites for forty years. Instead of placing the Israelites in bondage, the Philistines allowed the Israelites to live and work among them. As a result, the Israelites began to worship the pagan gods of the Philistines. God stepped in and called His chosen man to be a judge over the people for twenty years.

Sadly, Samson compromised his beliefs and chose to honor himself instead of God. Samson married a Philistine woman, in spite of her worship of pagan gods and his mother and father's objections (Judges 14). He broke his Nazirite vow by taking honey from the carcass of a lion (vv. 7-9). He slept with a harlot in Gaza (16:1).

Initially, I felt that Samson's violent reactions to the Philistines were part of his compromised behavior. However, the author wrote that the Lord "was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines" (14:4). Also, God's blessing was evidenced when He split a rock to provide water for Samson (15:18-20) and when the Spirit of the Lord was upon Samson (13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

What does the Spirit of the Lord coming upon someone mean? The Holy Spirit came upon Old Testament leaders to accomplish a specific purpose. He did not dwell in them. If that individual failed to follow the Lord, the Spirit departed from the unrepentant individual (1 Samuel 13:13-14; 16:14a; Psalm 51:11). However, since the coming of Christ, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells a believer at the moment

of salvation (John 10:27-29). The believer is eternally secure because the Holy Spirit seals the believer in Christ

### If You Love Me - Judges 16:13-15

Each time Delilah inquired about the source of his strength, Samson misled Delilah, giving her false information. Delilah did exactly what Samson said and then called for the Philistines. Samson escaped when his lie was discovered. Having been duped by Samson three times, Delilah questioned his love for her.

### The Philistines Are Here - Judges 16:16-20

Samson was worn down by Delilah and revealed to her the secret of his strength - his uncut hair. While asleep in Delilah's lap, Samson's head was shaved. He awoke as the Philistine leaders arrived. He thought he would escape as in the past, but he did not realize that God had departed from him.

Folks, Samson's story is a warning to us. How we treat temptation demonstrates our true love, either for God or for ourselves. When we place ourselves over God, He will not take away our salvation, but He may remove His hand of protection. I really don't want to look back at a compromised life and wonder, "Liz, what were you thinking?"

McGraw is development director of Crossroads SW Counseling Center, a conference speaker, life coach, and member of Woodville Church.

### Explore the Bible with Liz McGraw



(Ephesians 4:30). Keeping our background information in mind, let's take a brief look at Samson and Delilah.

### Please Tell Me - Judges 16:4-6

Samson's strength was in his hair, but his weakness was in his bad choices. He became smitten by Delilah, probably a Philistine. She made a business deal with the Philistine leaders to discover Samson's source of strength. She began her quest to discover Samson's secret.

## Growing with Joy • Philippians 3:12-21

### First News Flash:

I am not perfect. Confirmed by my personal experience, family, and friends.

### Second News Flash:

You are not perfect either. Confirmed by Isaiah 53:6 and Romans 3:23.

### Third News Flash:

We can both grow better. Confirmed by Philippians 3:16.

Paul told us about his goal of working toward perfection in the sense of maturity. This "Growing with Joy" is discussed in the focal passage we study today and begins this way:

"Not that I have already reached the goal or am already fully mature, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus," Philippians 3:12 (HCSB).

What did Paul mean when he said "because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus?" The answer to this question is in the verses just before it. "Be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. [My goal] is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His

death, assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead," Philippians 3:9-11 (HCSB).

Paul speculates here that he might still be alive at the resurrection of the dead. There seems to be a hint of a question in this passage and this is it, Paul knew that no one but God knows the time of the resurrection of the dead. Paul believed in the certainty of the resurrection of the dead but he did not know when. Paul's First Thessalonians letter explains what he believes and the New Testament clearly teaches:

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven

with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words," 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (HCSB).

Holman's translation of verse 18 uses the words "encourage one another" where King James uses the traditional,

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words," Philippians 4:18 (KJV). Since, in my experience, this passage is often used in

funerals and at open graves; I find rich emotional meaning in the words "comfort one another."

Paul wrote these words about this comfort or encouragement, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus," Philippians 3:14 (NIV). This is not an arrogant claim by Paul that says look how I won but points to God's gift in calling by Jesus' grace to

heaven. Paul's humble acknowledgment of dependence on Christ shows when he says, "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead," Philippians 3:13 (NIV).

We must not let our past mistakes and sins block us from growing toward maturity in Christ once we have been forgiven by God. Instead we must strain forward to live in what "God will make clear to you," and "Only let us live up to what we have already attained," Philippians 3:15-16 (NIV). At this point in our focal passage the Apostle Paul gives us a grave warning, "For as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ," Philippians 3:18 (NIV).

Then, Paul tells what is ahead as we strain to follow Christ in growing in joy. This is the claim of the promise given us in the New Testament, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body," Philippians 3:20-21 (NIV).

Hicks is associational missions director for Jasper Association in Bay Springs.

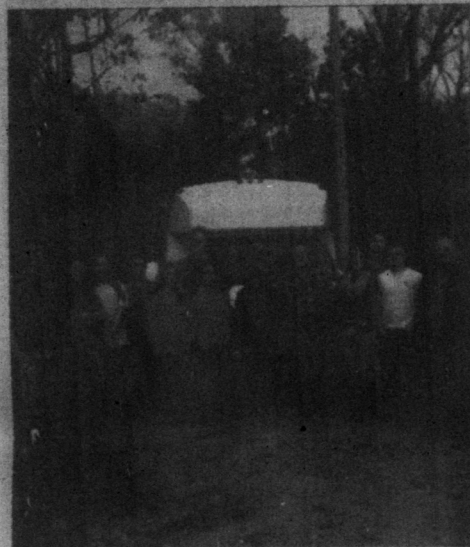
### Bible Studies for Life with Don Hicks



## Just for the Record



The choir of **GRACE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA**, presented the musical *One Small Child*. Tim Moore, minister of music.



Youth members from **NEW HOME CHURCH, BAY SPRINGS**, participated in an afternoon of eating and bowling.



### In other Church News:

► **Crossgates Church, Brandon**, is hosting multi-Dove and Grammy-award winning recording artist David Phelps Feb. 11, 7 p.m. For information, visit [www.crossgates.org](http://www.crossgates.org) or call (601) 825-2562. Ticket information is available at (800) 965-9324 or [www.itickets.com](http://www.itickets.com).

► **Highland Church, Laurel**, is hosting the Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra in concert Feb. 12, 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:15 p.m. Free.

► **First Church, Runnelstown**, will host The McKameys in concert Feb. 17, 7 p.m. Love offering. For information, call (601) 583-3733. Hal Hood, pastor.



**FIRST CHURCH, INVERNESS**, ordained three men as deacons. Shown are Martin Smith, his wife Kristen, and children Luke and Maisy; Hank Ferguson, his wife Amy, and son Eli; and Jody Evans, his wife Kathryn, and children Bann and Kete Hammond Evans.



**SAULS VALLEY CHURCH, MONTICELLO**, ordained Jimmy Dunaway as deacon Jan. 15. Bill Miller, officiant. Shown, front row, are Jerry Clark, Jamie Givens, Hulon McKenzie, Dunaway, and Miller. Back, pastor Winston Fortenberry and Buddy Ward.



**GOODWATER CHURCH, MAGEE**, held a note burning ceremony for the Fellowship Hall/Preschool education wing Jan. 29. Shown are former pastor Brent Barker, pastor Michael Giles, Wiley Ainsworth, oldest living building committee member, and church treasurer David Stewart.

**LAKE WASHINGTON FIRST CHURCH, GLEN ALLAN**, ordained Barrett Bruton, left, as deacon Jan. 22. He is shown with pastor Jimmy McLendon.

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